

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OPIC-03 AID-05 MC-02 NIC-01

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P R 281114Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1891

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1118

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PINS, PDEV, PO

SUBJ: CALL ON BRIGADIER OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO,

COPCON COMMANDER

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1. ACCOMPANIED BY DATT AND ARMA I CALLED LAST NIGHT (FEBRUARY 27) ON COPCON COMMANDER OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO.

2. AFTER BRIEF AMENITIES I RAISED QUESTION OF PHYSICAL SECURITY FOR POLITICAL PARTIES DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN, POINTING TO SERIOUSNESS OF OPORTO CDS AND LISBON PDC INCIDENTS. ASKED OTELO IF HE SAW CONTINUING PATTERN OF VIOLENCE AGAINST POLITICAL PARTIES.

3. OTELO THOUGHT VIOLENCE WOULD CONTINUE. A PEOPLE LIBERATED FROM YEARS OF DICTATORSHIP WERE BOUND TO INDULGE IN EXCESSES. I POINTED OUT THAT A LACK OF FULL PROTECTION FOR ALL PARTIES COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED CONSISTENT WITH GOP'S STATED DESIRES FOR A RETURN TO DEMOCRACY.

4. OTELO DID NOT DISPUTE THIS POINT, BUT RATHER LAMENTED THE LACK OF COPCON'S CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM.

5. PRIOR TO APRIL 25, HE SAID, THE ARMY HAD REMAINED IN THE BARRACKS AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERNAL SECURITY HAD BEEN LEFT TO THE GNR (REPUBLICAN NATIONAL GUARD) AND THE POLICE. SINCE THE REVOLUTION THE CAPABILITY OF THESE UNITS HAS DETERIORATED. PREVIOUSLY JUST PRESENCE OF GNR USED TO SCATTER DEMONSTRATORS; NOW IT ONLY PROVOKES THEM. RESULT IS THAT EVERYBODY LOOKS TO THE ARMY FOR SECURITY.

6. BUT THE ARMY HAS NEITHER THE EQUIPMENT NOR THE TRAINING TO DEAL WITH MOB VIOLENCE. COPCON RECOGNIZES THIS AND HAS ORDERED RIOT CONTROL EQUIPMENT SUCH AS TEAR GAS AND RUBBER BULLETS FROM THE U.K.

7. A FURTHER PROBLEM WAS THE "POLITICIZATION" OF THE ENLISTED RANKS. PRIOR TO APRIL 25 THE TROOPS HAD BEEN TOLD NOT TO THINK IN POLITICAL TERMS. ALL THAT HAS CHANGED AND VIRTUALLY ALL THE ENLISTED MEN ARE ASSOCIATED WITH POLITICAL PARTIES, GENERALLY THOSE OF THE EXTREME LEFT. THIS POLITICAL INFILTRATION COMES THROUGH THE LOWER GRADE OFFICERS (LIEUTENANTS) WHO ARE ALMOST ENTIRELY RESERVE OFFICERS.

8. ASKED HOW HE INTENDED TO DEAL WITH THIS, OTELO SAID HIS
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ONLY COURSE WAS TO TRY AND WORK THROUGH THE NEXT HIGHER GRADES (CAPTAINS) WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE REGULAR ARMY. IN THE LONG RUN THE ANSWER WAS TO RAISE SALARIES AND CREATE A VOLUNTEER ARMY.

9. I NOTED THAT DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS COPCON HAD MOUNTED AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF FORCE ON JANUARY 31. INCIDENTS SUCH AS OPORTO AND ATTACKS ON THE PDC RALLY WERE QUICKLY PICKED UP BY

THE OVERSEAS PRESS AND DAMAGED THE GOP'S IMAGE ABROAD. OTELO SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS.

10. IN A BRIEF EXCHANGE ON POLITICAL PARTIES, OTELO TOOK A "PLAGUE-ON-LL-THEIR-HOUSES" ATTITUDE. SAID HE HAD TOLD PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES HE COULDN'T VOTE FOR ANY, SINCE NONE WAS ACTIN IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. FOR THIS REASON HE FELT IT NECESSARY FOR THE AFM TO INSTITUTIONALIZE ITSELF. I NOTED THE DELICACY AND THE DIFFICULTY OF TRYING TO BALANCE DEMOCRACY WITH MILITARY INTERVENTION, BUT AM NOT SURE OTELO GOT THE MESSAGE. (I PLAN TO BE MORE BLUNT WHEN I SEEN HIM NEXT TIME.)

11. COMMENT: DATT AND ARMA AGREE THAT OTELO HAS A POINT WHEN HE LAMENTS THE CAPACITY OF COPCON TO HANDLE CIVIL DISORDERS. HE CONVENIENTLY OVERLOOKS ADVERSE IMPACT OF HIS OWN PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHEN HE REFERS TO POLITICIZATION OF HIS TROOPS. BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT BREAKDOWN OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE MILITARY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY A PROBLEM.

12. GIVEN LACK OF TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT FOR RIOT CONTROL, AFM IS FACED WITH ONLY TWO CHOICES: MUSTER A SHOW OF STRENGTH AND TRY TO NEGOTIATE WITH DEMONSTRATORS OR MOVE IN WITH OVERKILL TACTICS. OTELO WAS TELLING US IN EFFECT THAT HIS TROOPS WOULD NOT OBEY ORDERS TO DO THE LATTER; HENCE HE HAD OPTED FOR THE FORMER.

13. DESPITE ITS PROBLEMS THERE IS NO DOUBT AFM COULD TAKE FIRMER STANCE TOWARD VIOLENCE-PRONE EXTREMISTS IF IT WERE NOT SO AFRAID OF COMPROMISING ITS "PROGRESSIVE" POSTURE. FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN A HIGH LEVEL CONDEMNATION WOULD HELP. I WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE PROTECTION TO PARTIES IN MY SESSIONS WITH GOP AND AFM AND AM ENCOURAGING CONFIDENTIAL

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MY WESTERN EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES TO DO LIKEWISE.
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